

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This document contains summaries of 24 marketing projects funded by the Agricultural Marketing Service's (AMS) Marketing Services Branch (MSB) in 2000 to encourage innovative sustainable agricultural practices. AMS and the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program of the United States Department of Agriculture's Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (USDA/CSREES) partnered to provide a total of \$500,000 in grants to producers. As a result of this partnership, MSB developed cooperative agreements with the universities that host each of the four SARE regions: University of Vermont, University of Nebraska, University of Georgia, and Utah State University. The overall objective of this project was to carry out marketing projects and examine the potential of new and emerging marketing opportunities in sustainable agriculture. University personnel from each region solicited, reviewed and selected projects, using its established producer grant review process, with the involvement of AMS marketing staff. A total of 35 projects were funded, of which 24 were completed by grant recipients. These projects were allocated across regions as follows:

- Northeast (8)
- Southern (3)
- North Central (3)
- Western (10)

The 24 projects listed in this document represent the diversity of producers and marketing channels that exist today. Projects cover such issues as agricultural entrepreneurship, ethnic markets, Native American products, Internet marketing, cooperative development, and niche marketing of meat and dairy products, including specialty poultry, lamb, beef, and cheeses. These case studies highlight the successes and challenges of the projects, so that other producers might learn from these examples, replicate these models, where appropriate, and be more effective in their marketing operations. In order to effectively communicate the relevant information by these projects, they are presented in the following format:

- Purpose – describing the overall objective(s) of the project
- Accomplishments – explaining what steps were taken to carry out project objectives
- Lessons Learned – identifying the specific lessons project managers learned from carrying out project objectives
- Conclusion – describing how project managers perceived the larger implications of the project for other agricultural producers

By publishing this document and sharing case studies from the field, MSB continues to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on alternative marketing channels for farm products, and develop materials that help producers take advantage of these emerging market opportunities.